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In Memoriam: Richard Huber, 1919-2011

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In Memoriam: Richard Huber, 1919-2011

2011 NEWS ARCHIVE

12/12/11



Newton, MA—The Boston College Law School community is saddened by the loss of former Dean and longtime faculty member Richard Huber, who passed away this weekend. He was 92 years old.

"Dick Huber was well-known for his warm, generous nature, his intellect and compassion, and his ability to bring out the best in everyone he touched," said BC Law Dean Vincent Rougeau. "He will be missed."

Huber began teaching at BC Law in 1957, served as dean from 1970-1985, and continued teaching for the school until retiring in 2005. He had a tremendous influence on BC Law as dean, overseeing the move from More Hall on the BC Chestnut Hill campus to the school's current Newton campus in 1975, helping introduce the first joint degree program in collaboration with the business school, and increasing resources for clinical programs and courses, among many other efforts.

He was also very active in AHANA recruitment and hiring. In 1977, Huber hired the Law School's first full-time black professor, 1974 graduate Ruth-Arlene Howe. Former Dean Daniel Coquillette, who succeeded Huber in 1985, said he built on Dean Robert Drinan, S.J.'s legacy, and called Huber "one of the great, monumental figures of our time," not just at Boston College, but in all of legal education. Huber's work as president of both the Association of American Law Schools and the Council on Legal Education Opportunity changed the course of legal education and the profession. "He played a vital role in minority enrollment, not just at BC but nationally," Coquillette said. "Besides promotion of minorities, Dick was a tremendous advocate for women in law school...by the time he was done, female enrollment here went from essentially nothing to about 40%."

The Environmental Affairs Law Review, International and Comparative Law Review, and Third World Law Journal at BC Law all began under Huber's leadership. The Black American, Asian American, and Latin American law students associations formed. Faculty size grew by eight between 1970 and 1979 alone, and slots were created for a director of alumni relations and a director of admissions and financial aid. He also helped build the law library from a one-room operation to a first-class, national powerhouse with over 150,000 volumes.

But Huber may be best remembered and loved for his people skills. "Dick's unique contribution was internal," says Sharon Hamby O'Connor, BC Law librarian from 1979 to 2002. "He had a remarkable ability to find the best in people without being unaware of their foibles, to bring out the best in a person without being paternalistic."

Huber fostered a culture of collegiality among faculty and between faculty and students that became ingrained and remains one of the Law School's hallmarks. "The school really thrived under Dick," said Charles "Buzzy" Baron, who served as an assistant dean under Huber. "When people came to him with ideas, his attitude was, let's see if we can make that work. Nobody could have been more nurturing than Dick. There was no sense of playing favorites; he was supportive of everyone. He cared about everybody honestly."

When Coquillette was hired as dean, he inherited a Law School that was as promising outwardly as it was inwardly, thanks to Huber's generous nature. He remains forever grateful.

"Dick was an enormous help to me when I took over," Coquillette said. "He was always available, someone I could turn to at any time, a best friend. The school was in excellent shape. He had this naval background, a way of leading that was probably developed at the academy, and I always thought of him as captain of the ship. Everyone looked up to him...You have to remember that Dick came in during a time of campus unrest, not just at BC but across the country, and he followed a tremendously popular dean in Bob Drinan. Those were critical years for BC. But when I came in, it was the happiest law school I'd ever seen."

Huber received his B.S. degree from the United States Naval Academy in 1941, his J.D. degree from the [University of Iowa](#) in 1950 and his Masters in Law degree from [Harvard University](#) in 1951. He served his country with distinction in World War II and the Korean War. Huber authored numerous articles in his fields of expertise: Land Use and Property Law, Professional Responsibility, Constitutional Law, Environmental Law and Legal Education. He was the recipient of Honorary Degree of Doctor of Laws from Northeastern University, New England School of Law and Roger Williams University.

Huber served for many years as Trustee of Beaver Country Day School, Chairman of the Executive Board of the Social Welfare Research Institute and Trustee and Committee Chairman of the New England Chapter of Multiple Sclerosis Society. He was one of the first recipients of the National MS Society's Hope award.

Visiting hours will be held on Tuesday, December 13, 2011, 2-4 pm & 6-8 pm at the Lehman Reen & McNamara Funeral Home in Brighton. Services will be held on Wednesday, December 14, 2011 at 10 am at St. Ignatius Church on the Chestnut Hill campus.

In lieu of flowers, donations in memory of Huber may be made to the New England Chapter of Multiple Sclerosis Society, PO Box 845445 Boston, MA 02284.